

Acton FinCom March 22, 2005 Minutes

Members Present: Jonathan Chinitz, Pat Clifford, Pat Easterly, Bob Evans, Herman Kabakoff, Gim Hom, Rheta Roeber, John Ryder, David Stone

Review of 2005 Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Rheta Roeber 25A/25B Ham Radio Articles – These are the Planning Board and Selectmen’s versions of the same issue. The plan is to vote on 25A first, and if it passes, to skip over 25B. The 25B version is more restrictive, for instance on the number of antennas that are allowed, but allows the Board of Appeals to grant exceptions by special permit. The 25B article also has a height restriction.

John Ryder asked whether either of these articles is fully compliant with the applicable Federal law that governs HAM radio.

Gim Hom, who is a licensed HAM radio operator, noted other issues with the 25B wording, such as placing a restriction on “all antennas”, which might be read to include TV antennas. And the process of going to the Zoning Board of Appeals is cumbersome and expensive.

In response to a question, Rheta Roeber notes that the existing by-law limits towers to 36 feet, so there is need to pass something that is at least closer to compliance with Federal law. Denial of a citizen’s application under the existing by-law is the subject of an ongoing lawsuit.

FinCom voted unanimously to recommend 25A and not recommend 25B.

Jonathan Chinitz noted that DOR prohibits enterprise funds from projecting more revenue in FY06 than was actually received in FY05. So, items like the Nursing Enterprise Fund may not be able to make accurate projections in order to project their FY06 budgets.

Article 13 Senior Tax Relief – Pat Clifford – This article requires approval of a home rule petition by the legislature, which has additional legislation pending. It would allow the town to grant a special classification to a narrowly defined subset of senior citizen’s, who have less than \$150,000 in other assets and receive at least 75% of their income from Social Security or a government pension. By a rough estimate, about 300 taxpayers might qualify, with a resulting shift of about \$11/average tax bill to the remaining taxpayers. Herman Kabakoff noted that the requirement to make one’s financial circumstances known to the Town may further inhibit applications.

The FinCom voted 8-1 to recommend Article 13.

Article 14 – Standby Budget Transfer – FinCom voted to remain deferred.

Article 16 – NESWC Enterprise Budget – FinCom voted to recommend approval.

Article 17 – Community Preservation Program – FinCom voted 5-2-2 to recommend approval.

Article 18 Inter-Municipal Agreement for Leary Field – FinCom voted to recommend approval.

Article 22 Minuteman – Recommendation deferred.

Article 23 and 24 Carry-In liquor – FinCom voted to recommend approval.

Consent Calendar – FinCom voted to recommend the consent calendar.

Article 1 – Selectmen’s salaries – FinCom voted to recommend approval.

Article 2 – Hear and accept reports – FinCom voted to remain deferred.

Approval of the Minutes of 3-8-05 – The draft minutes were deferred.

Committee Reports

Health Insurance Trust – Mr. Ryder reported that the trust has voted to raise rates by 26%.

School Building Projects – Dr. Evans noted that the High School Building was dedicated on Sunday and the project is for all intents and purposes complete. The Finance Committee voted to thank Dr. Evans for his long service on this committee

School Committees – Pat Easterly said she would be circulating finalized budgets by the end of the week.

LAN – Mr. Stone updated FinCom on the progress of LAN’s work to date and the plan for a Special Town Meeting on June 13th.

Public Safety Building – Jonathan Chinitz reported that we are now ready to begin moving out of the old police station.

Next meeting 6 p.m. on Monday April 4th at the High School.